



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

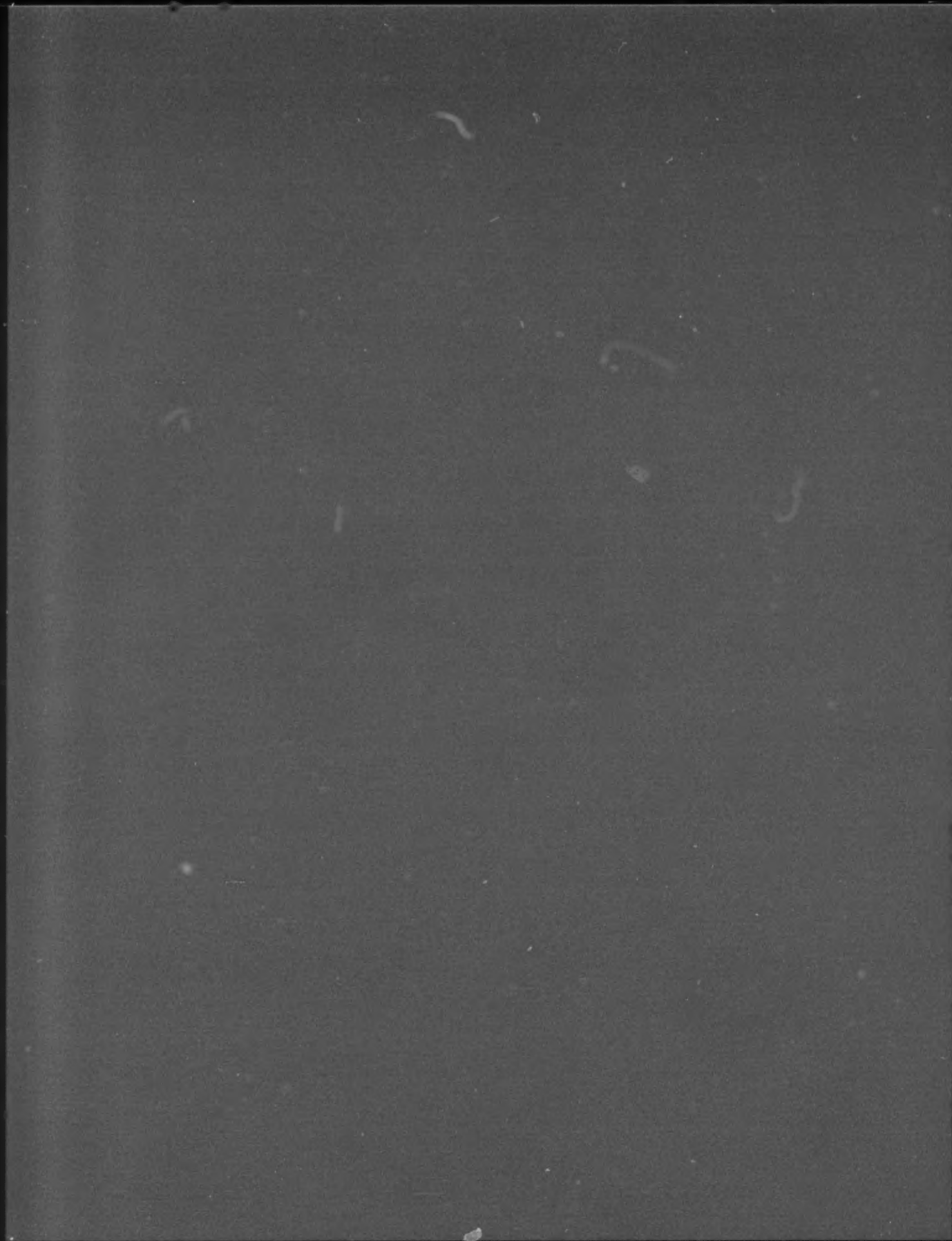
Ombudsman

National Defence  
and Canadian Forces



Défense nationale  
et Forces canadiennes

Canada



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May 25, 2011

The Honourable Peter MacKay, P.C., Q.C., M.P.  
Minister of National Defence  
National Defence Headquarters  
Major-General George R. Pearkes Building  
101 Colonel By Drive  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor, North Tower  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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Dear Minister,

I am pleased to submit to you *Making a Difference*, the 2010-2011 annual report for the Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces. This report provides an overview of our activities and operations from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011.

Pursuant to paragraph 38(2)(a) of the Ministerial Directives, please be advised that we intend to publish this report on the expiration of 60 days from the date of this letter.

Yours truly,

**Pierre Daigle**  
Ombudsman  
Department of National Defence  
and Canadian Forces



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE	2
AN OFFICE THAT CAN HELP	6
THE YEAR IN REVIEW: 2010-2011	8
INDIVIDUAL CASES	8
ISSUES OF CONCERN	10
BROADER INVESTIGATIONS	12
LOOKING AHEAD	18
BROADER INVESTIGATIONS	18
CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES	19
OUTREACH	21
OMBUDSMAN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE	25
OMBUDSMAN'S COMMENDATIONS	27
APPENDIX I – DISPOSITION OF CASES	29
APPENDIX II – FINANCIAL REPORT	30

## OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE

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**Pierre Daigle, Ombudsman**

With our absolute dedication to securing real results for our constituents, we have been able to achieve positive outcomes for countless members of the Defence community over the past thirteen years.

I am pleased to present the 2010-2011 annual report for the Office of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman.

Over the past year, we continued to focus our efforts on our *raison d'être* as an office: helping the men and women of the Canadian Forces, their families, civilian employees of National Defence and our other constituents. I am proud that we were able to provide assistance to 1,688 members of the Defence community last year. We are often the last hope for many individuals who are suffering with the consequences of an unfair decision, action or policy of National Defence or the Canadian Forces. With our absolute dedication to securing real results for our constituents, we have been able to achieve positive outcomes for countless members of the Defence community over the past thirteen years.

Our most visible intervention in recent years was related to the care and treatment of families who have lost a military loved one while serving their country. This issue has been a priority for our office since the release of our 2005 special report, *When a Soldier Falls*, and our follow-up review in 2009. In a series of exchanges with the Minister of National Defence in 2009 and 2010, I informed him that we continued to receive complaints from military families who were not getting the information, support or assistance they needed after their loved one died as a result of military service. In order to 'humanize' these problems for the Minister, I wrote to him in April 2010, detailing the troubling experiences of six military families after the death of their Canadian Forces loved one.

After additional exchanges with the Minister, and further investigative work by our office, I published all correspondence to date on this issue in December 2010 and held a press conference in order to highlight the very real suffering of these military families. I found it inconceivable that the Canadian Forces continued to ignore important recommendations aimed at helping military families after the death of a Canadian Forces loved one. It was even more disappointing when I recognized that the changes needed to ensure that the military families were treated with dignity and compassion would cost the Canadian Forces nothing.

As part of a status report to the Minister in March 2011, we identified areas in which progress had been made. I also indicated that some of the families still required further follow-up and information, and we have been contacted by new families who have similar concerns. We continue to monitor all of these troubling cases.

Our focus on Canadian Forces families has also shed light on a number of other issues that affect their lives, including: operational tempo; operational stress injuries; housing; medical concerns; and social and community support. Our office receives an average of 85-100 complaints

a year from military families and, during my outreach visits, I always meet with families to listen to their concerns. I remain committed to informing the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces of the challenges facing Canadian Forces members and their families, and to providing assistance in addressing these challenges. We will also expand upon our work related to military families over the coming year.

Another priority for our office has been housing available to Canadian Forces members and their families. In 2009, I shared my concerns with the Chief of the Defence Staff after our office completed a preliminary investigation of complaints related to military housing. We continue to receive complaints about the condition of private married quarters and, during my outreach visits, I have seen first-hand some of the realities of Canadian Forces housing. I have seen units with nicely renovated kitchens or bathrooms and other units where the presence of mould supported the health risk concerns reported by some families. The Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces recently shared a copy of an external review on housing conducted by an independent panel. Following our review of this report, I will formalize my position on this important issue.

Over the past fiscal year, we also released the findings of our investigation into the Canadian Forces grievance process. Our report highlighted deficiencies in the grievance process that are causing further hardship for Canadian Forces members who have already been wronged. Specifically, we determined that the Chief of the Defence Staff, who is the final decision-maker in the grievance process, does not have the authority to provide financial compensation to fully resolve an unfairness. Instead, when a claim for compensation arising from a grievance is made, it is a government lawyer in an advisory role – not the Chief of the Defence Staff – who determines if compensation should be paid to the Canadian Forces member. In my view, it simply defies logic that the Chief of the Defence Staff is charged with the control and administration of the Canadian Forces but is not given the authority to pay out even a small claim.

As a result of our investigation, I recommended that the Chief of the Defence Staff be able to grant financial compensation for the simple reason that, in certain circumstances, fairness cannot be achieved by any other means. We will continue to monitor this issue in 2011-2012.

We also received a number of complaints related to the Reserve Force Pension Plan over the past year. On March 1, 2007, over 15,000 Reserve Force members became eligible for benefits under the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act*. Since then, more than 9,000 members have submitted a service election. Our preliminary investigation into complaints regarding this pension plan identified a number of concerns, including: a backlog in the processing of service elections; delays in the payment of pension benefits; no formalized complaint process available; and possible differences in the regulations that apply to Reserve Force members compared to Regular Force members. In May 2010, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada announced that it would undertake a performance audit of the Reserve Force Pension Plan. We will review the Auditor General's audit report planned for spring 2011 before deciding on a way forward on this matter.

Over the coming fiscal year, we will also finalize a third follow-up investigation regarding the issue of operational stress injuries. In releasing *A Long Road to Recovery* in 2008, our office made nine recommendations to the Minister of National Defence which were intended to ensure that mental health sufferers in the Defence community received consistent, quality and timely care. While we recognize that progress has been made by the Canadian Forces to prevent, identify and treat military personnel suffering from mental health injuries, the large number of current military sufferers – and even larger number of anticipated sufferers – has led us to conclude that additional review and evaluation is required.

In addition to addressing individual complaints and broader concerns in the Defence community over the past year, we also focused our efforts on improving the overall quality and timeliness of the services that we provide to our constituents. We finalized our longer term reorganization of the Operations branch, bringing greater clarity and efficiency to our core business of education, referral, informal resolution and investigation. We also moved our Strategic Outreach group under the umbrella of Operations in order to offer more robust services to our constituents where they live and work, and to take better advantage of the natural synergies between the two groups. Finally, we focused and streamlined our corporate support functions with the view to increasing efficiency wherever possible and improving the quality of support available to the Operations branch. With these changes, I am confident that we will be better positioned to provide high quality service and assistance to the Defence community.

Although I am proud of what we, as an office, have achieved in 2010-2011, it has been difficult to fulfill our mandate as effectively as we needed to given the significant administrative hurdles that we have been forced to overcome by National Defence and the Canadian Forces. Our mandate from the Minister of National Defence states clearly that "The Ombudsman shall be independent from the management and chain of command of the DND and CF and shall report directly to and be accountable to the Minister." Unfortunately, the actions of some offices in National Defence have impaired this independence. Most notably, as of March 31, 2011, I still had not received my formal financial delegations, a full two years after having been appointed Ombudsman. Not only has this taken a great deal of our time and energy to sort out, but it has had an impact on my authority to initiate and approve the activities and operations of the office.

Our formal mandate also states that "The DND and CF as institutions, and all levels of authority within them, shall provide the Ombudsman, in accordance with the law and consistent with operational and security requirements, with all support, assistance and co-operation required by the Ombudsman to perform the duties and functions of the Ombudsman." Unfortunately, this support has been questionable at times on the finance and administrative fronts.

Given these challenges to our independence and operations over the past two years, and the impact they have had on our ability to provide quality service to our constituents, I intend to initiate, with the Minister of National Defence, the process to bring the Office of the Ombudsman under legislation. I now firmly believe the only way we will be able to fulfill our duties properly and effectively is to have a legislated mandate, which includes the financial and administrative authority to conduct our operations fully independent of National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

Over the next fiscal year, we will also undertake the planning required to co-host the Fourth International Conference of Ombudsman Institutions for the Armed Forces in Ottawa in September 2012. This annual conference is dedicated to the exchange of best practices related to the protection and promotion of the welfare and rights of armed forces personnel amongst military ombudsmen from around the world. I am honoured to have been asked to co-host this prestigious conference, particularly given that this will be the first time it will be held in North America.

I look forward to the coming year and I am eager to report on the results that we achieve on the issues identified above and many more. It remains an absolute privilege to be responsible for discharging our office's mandate: To bring positive change to the Defence community because we care about the people we serve.

**Pierre Daigle**  
Ombudsman





## AN OFFICE THAT CAN HELP

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Our mission is to bring positive change to the Defence community because we care about the people we serve.



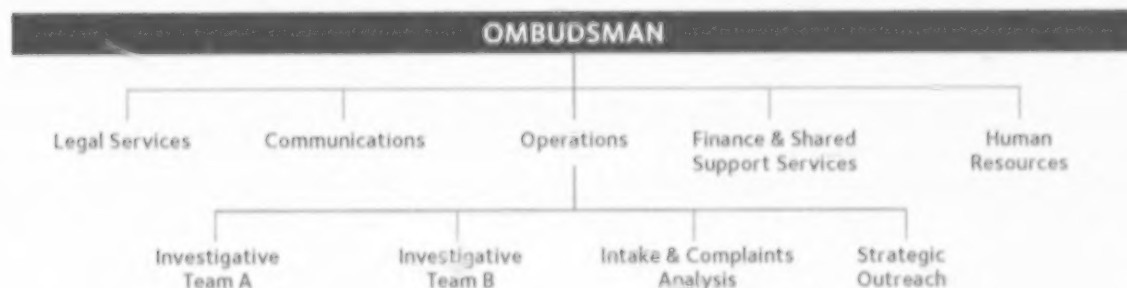
The Office of the Ombudsman was created in 1998 to increase openness and transparency in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, as well as to ensure the fair treatment of concerns raised by Canadian Forces members, departmental employees, and their families.

The office acts as a direct source of information, referral and education. It helps members of the Defence community navigate a large and complex organization in order to access existing channels of assistance or redress when they have a complaint or concern.

The office is also responsible for reviewing and investigating complaints from current and former Canadian Forces members, departmental employees, family members and other constituents who believe they have been treated improperly or unfairly by the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Forces.

Ombudsman investigators always attempt to resolve complaints informally and at the lowest level possible. However, complaints can also be the subject of thorough investigations, leading to a formal report with findings and recommendations that are made public.

More broadly, the Ombudsman has a mandate to investigate and make recommendations to improve the overall well-being and quality of life of the members of the Defence community. Investigations from the office have produced substantial and long-lasting improvements in the Canadian Forces, including important changes in the areas of post-traumatic stress disorder and operational stress injuries and improvements in the treatment received by the families of military members who are killed during their service to Canada.



Independent and impartial, we are dedicated to fairness for all.

The Ombudsman is independent of the military chain of command and senior civilian management, reporting directly to the Minister of National Defence. The Ombudsman is appointed to the position under legislation. The office itself derives its authority from Ministerial Directives and their accompanying Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs).

The Ombudsman is supported by an office of approximately sixty federal public servants, including investigators, complaint analysts and intake officers with a great deal of knowledge and expertise in military matters. Ombudsman investigators include former police officers, former Canadian Forces members of all ranks and occupations and public servants from across the federal government.

The Office of the Ombudsman stands ready to help members of the Defence community, including:

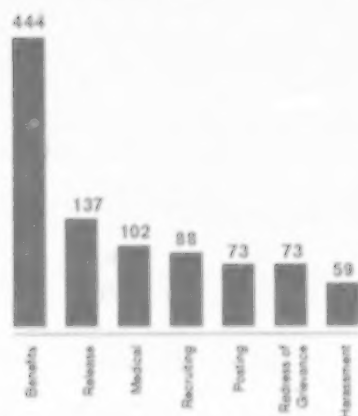
- Current and former members of the Canadian Forces (Regular Force and Reservists);
- Current and former employees of the Department of National Defence;
- Current and former members of the Cadets;
- Current and former Non-Public Fund employees;
- Individuals applying to become a member of the Canadian Forces;
- Immediate family members of any of the above-mentioned; and
- Individuals on exchange or secondment with the Canadian Forces.

Members of the Defence community who bring a concern or complaint to the Ombudsman's office can do so without fear of reprisal. In addition, all information obtained by the office during the handling of cases is treated as confidential. The office will not provide any information related to a case or investigation to anyone without written consent from the complainant.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW: 2010-2011

### Common Complaints (2010-2011)

#### Top Seven Complaints



### New Complaints by Category (2010-2011)

Regular Force	574
Former Military	270
Reserve Force	174
Family Member	144
Civilian Employee	79
Regular Force Applicant	30
Former Civilian Employee	15
Cadet CIC	11
Cadet	2
Reserve Force Applicant	8
Non-Public Fund Employee	6
Anonymous	70
Non-Constituent	71
Total	1,454

Over the past year, the Office of the Ombudsman achieved real and positive results for Canada's Defence community.

### INDIVIDUAL CASES

Throughout 2010-2011, the office received 1,454 new cases from Canadian Forces members, civilian employees, military family members and other constituents. The top seven categories of new cases were related to: **benefits** (including the denial of benefits and the forced repayment of monies by members due to an administrative error); **release from military service** (including members who felt they were being unjustly released and those whose voluntary release requests were delayed); **medical issues** (including complaints related to inadequate medical treatment and/or follow-up care); **recruiting** (including complaints related to the unfair rejection of applications and delays in the recruiting process); **military postings** (including complaints related to the denial of compassionate and cost-contingency posting requests); **redress of grievance** (including complaints related to the unfair denial of financial compensation); and **harassment** (including complaints involving the abuse of power).

The Ombudsman's office also assists members of the Defence community with complaints and concerns related to promotions, leave and vacation, access to information, training, disciplinary action and more.

In total, Ombudsman investigators and intake officers closed 1,302 cases over the past year, including new cases, cases re-opened and cases left over from previous years. As of March 31, 2011, 386 cases were still in progress.

As in past years, the majority of new cases were brought to the office by serving and retired members of the Canadian Forces. The office also received at least 244 cases from civilian members of the Defence community, including employees and former employees of the Department of National Defence, family members of military personnel or civilian employees and non-public fund employees.



### New Complaints by Category (2007-2008 to 2010-2011)

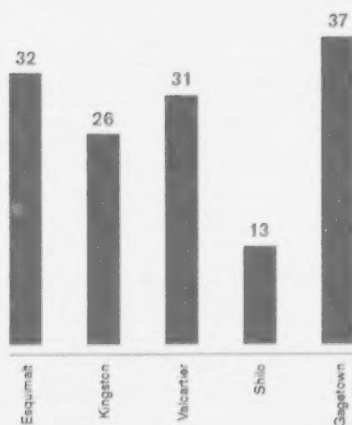
Fiscal Year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Regular Force	559	449	478	574
Former Military	322	238	263	270
Reserve Force	181	128	165	174
Family Member	92	83	109	144
Civilian Employee	42	47	61	79
Regular Force Applicant	35	20	30	30
Former Civilian Employee	12	17	18	15
Cadet CIC				11
Cadet	7	11	11	2
Reserve Force Applicant	12	4	8	8
Non-Public Fund Employee	1	4	7	6
Anonymous	10	4	7	70
Non-Constituent	65	76	46	71
Total	1,338	1,081	1,203	1,454

In 2010-2011, the largest number of new complaints originated in Ontario, followed by the Western Region, the Atlantic Region and Quebec.

### New Complaints by Region (2010-2011)

Atlantic Region	238
New Brunswick	92
Newfoundland/Labrador	13
Nova Scotia	128
Prince Edward Island	5
Quebec	235
Ontario	561
Northern Region	6
Nunavut	1
Northwest Territories	4
Yukon Territory	1
Prairies	73
Manitoba	57
Saskatchewan	16
Western Region	305
Alberta	147
British Columbia	158
Outside Canada	29
Unknown/Not Available	7
Total	1,454

## Outreach



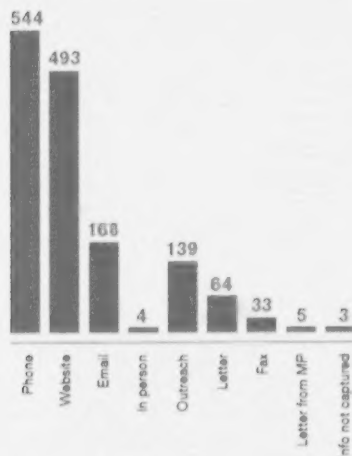
## Complaints Submitted during Ombudsman Outreach Visits (2010-2011)

In 2010-2011, the Ombudsman and staff travelled to five Canadian Forces bases and received a total of 139 complaints directly from members of the Defence community.

## Communicating with the Office (2010-2011)

Over the past year, the vast majority of new complainants contacted the Ombudsman's office through the office's toll-free telephone number (1-888-828-3626) and the Ombudsman's website ([www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca](http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca)).

## Means of Communication



## ISSUES OF CONCERN

### Reserve Force Pension Plan

The Ombudsman's office has seen an increase in the number of complaints that relate to pensions. A review of these complaints prompted a preliminary investigation that identified concerns with the Reserve Force Pension Plan, including: the buy-back program; delays in issuing payment of benefits; no formalized complaint process; and differences in pension regulations between the Reserve Force and Regular Force.

- On March 1, 2007, over 15,000 Reserve Force members became eligible for benefits under the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act*. During a two year window following the introduction of the Reserve Force Pension Plan, members were provided with the opportunity to submit service elections in order to count prior military service towards their total pensionable service. This window of opportunity was subsequently extended by one year – until February 28, 2011 – to ensure that as many Reserve Force members as possible were able to take advantage of the program. It was anticipated that 7,500 members would make an election; over 9,000 members have now done so.
- At the end of fiscal year 2009-2010, 342 of 9,213 service elections had been processed. As of March 31, 2011, only 757 of 11,090 service elections had been processed. According to forecasts made by the Directorate of Canadian Forces Pension Service, the backlog will not be fully addressed until some time after fiscal year 2013-2014. Priority is given to the elections of Reserve Force members who have released from the Canadian Forces.

- The published service standard for the payment of pension benefits following release from the Reserve Force is currently 26 to 32 weeks (6 to 8 months). This delay is more than double the published service standard for the Regular Force. The lengthy delay for Reserve Force members, who retire from the Canadian Forces, to receive payment of pension benefits may result in financial hardship in situations where the member has no other source of income.
- The Directorate of Canadian Forces Pension Service has not established or publicized a formal complaint mechanism. Under Section 93 of the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act*, any member dissatisfied with a decision made under the Act that affects their benefits may apply to the Minister for reconsideration in the form and manner prescribed by regulation. Whereas this section was in force on March 1, 2007, the regulation to support it has not yet been established.
- There appears to be differences in pension regulations between the Regular Force and Reserve Force that are of significant concern to constituents. These include the entitlement to an immediate annuity following release on medical grounds; the commencement date of benefits following a component transfer to the Supplementary Reserve; and the requirement to repay an annuity as part of a service election.

Following the office's preliminary investigation, Ombudsman investigators were informed that the Department of National Defence had undertaken actions to address the backlog of service elections and the delays for payment of pension benefits. As the Ombudsman's office was preparing to initiate a formal investigation into these issues, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada announced, in May 2010, that it would undertake a performance audit of the Reserve Force Pension Plan. On its website, the Office of the Auditor General provides the following summary: "The audit looks at the approach used by National Defence to plan and implement a pension plan for the Reserve Force. The audit also looked at whether the Department had the means necessary to

operate the Plan, including an organizational structure, resources, and information systems and control procedures."

The Ombudsman's office will review the Auditor General's audit report and its recommendations to Parliament on the Reserve Force Pension Plan before finalizing its own position on this matter. In the interim, the office continues to monitor the concerns associated with the Reserve Force Pension Plan.

#### Residential Housing

The Ombudsman's office has had longstanding concerns regarding residential housing for Canadian Forces members and their families. The Ombudsman shared his concerns and the findings of a preliminary investigation with the Chief of the Defence Staff in 2009. Following this, the office continued to receive complaints that relate to requests for repairs, unsatisfactory repairs and problems that pose a risk to the health and safety of Canadian Forces members and their families. The Ombudsman has also had the opportunity to see several private married quarters during his outreach visits.

While monitoring the housing situation, the Ombudsman's office was informed that an independent panel was mandated to provide an external review of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces policy framework for the provision of residential housing. The independent panel finalized a report in November 2010 and a copy of this report was provided to the Ombudsman's office in March 2011. In the new fiscal year, the office will follow up with the Department for their response to the report and action plan, and it will continue to monitor complaints that relate to housing and the impact on Canadian Forces members and their families.

## BROADER INVESTIGATIONS

### Unfairness in the Redress of Grievance Process

In May 2010, the Ombudsman's office published a special report on the Canadian Forces redress of grievance process, entitled *The Canadian Forces Grievance Process: Making It Right for Those Who Serve*, highlighting deficiencies in the grievance process that are causing further hardship for Canadian Forces members who have already been wronged.

As a result of the investigation, the office found that the redress of grievance process – which is supposed to provide soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen with a quick and informal mechanism to challenge Canadian Forces actions and resolve matters without the need of the courts or other processes – is flawed and unfair.

Specifically, it was determined that the Chief of the Defence Staff, who is the final decision-maker in the grievance process, does not have the authority to provide financial compensation to fully resolve an unfairness. Instead, when a claim for compensation arising from a grievance is made, it is a government lawyer – not the Chief of the Defence Staff – who determines if compensation should be paid to the Canadian Forces member.

In releasing the report, the Ombudsman stated: "In my view, it simply defies logic that the Chief of the Defence Staff is charged with the control and administration of the Canadian Forces, but is not given the authority to pay out a \$50 claim." He added, "It also seems unreasonable to our office that a government lawyer, whose role is to provide advice, has more decision-making authority regarding compensation than the Chief of the Defence Staff."

The office also found that, when considering the issue of compensation, government lawyers rely on government-wide policies and directives that are often at odds with the goals and principles of the military grievance process, usually resulting in the denial of compensation requests.

Moreover, when claims are rejected, Canadian Forces members are informed that they must initiate legal action against the Government of Canada in order to obtain compensation. However, unbeknownst to most men and women in uniform, legal action will rarely be heard by a court because previous courts have ruled there is no legally enforceable employment contract between the Crown and Canadian Forces members.

As a result of the investigation, the Ombudsman concluded that it is necessary that the Chief of the Defence Staff be able to grant financial compensation for the simple reason that, in certain circumstances, fairness cannot be achieved by any other means. The Ombudsman stated: "We must give commanders the tools and authority to take care of their people, and Canadian Forces members must have confidence that their commanders will take care of them. This is a leadership and morale issue."

The Ombudsman's office was not the first to recognize this problem nor was it the first to make recommendations that it be fixed. Indeed, after an external independent review in 2003, the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Antonio Lamer, recommended that the Chief of the Defence Staff be given authority to settle financial claims in grievances. In his report, the former Chief Justice stated, "Soldiers are not second class citizens. They are entitled to be treated with respect, and in the case of the grievance process, in a procedurally fair manner. This is a fundamental principle that must not be lost in a bureaucratic process, even a military one." Ultimately, a proper grievance process must be able to determine whether someone was treated fairly as well as to correct any unfair or improper treatment.

After a series of meetings with senior officials and follow up correspondence with the Minister of National Defence, the Ombudsman has been informed that his recommendations for change are still being considered, more than a year after the report was published.





During an appearance at the Standing Parliamentary Committee on National Defence to discuss his views on the military grievance process in February 2011, the Ombudsman stated, "given that eight years has elapsed without a resolution to this unfairness – and from a sound public policy point of view – I believe it is time to make the legislative changes necessary to clarify and ensure the Chief of the Defence Staff has the authority to provide financial compensation to fully resolve unfairness, and to ensure the grievance system can actually serve the men and women of the Canadian Forces as it was intended."

A complete list of the recommendations, and additional information on the Office of the Ombudsman's report, can be found on the office's website at: [www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca](http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca).

#### Investigation of a Pension Denied

A complainant contended that her deceased husband, a Royal Canadian Naval Voluntary Reserve veteran of the Second World War and a retired post-war member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, was unfairly denied the option of receiving a reduced annuity upon his voluntary release from the Canadian military in September 1965. In a letter to the Ombudsman, the Minister of National Defence determined that it was in the public interest for the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate this issue.

A formal investigation was started in late 2009 to determine if the complainant's late husband was treated fairly when he released from the Canadian Forces.

Following numerous interviews and significant archival research, the Ombudsman's office concluded that the complainant's late husband was, indeed, treated fairly when he released from the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1965 and was given a return of contributions rather than a reduced annuity. These conclusions were communicated to the complainant and the Minister of National Defence in September 2010.

#### Treatment of Military Families

On October 14, 2009, the Ombudsman released the findings of his follow-up review of the office's special report, *When a Soldier Falls: Reviewing the Response to Master Corporal Wheeler's Accidental Death*. This review tracked the progress made by National Defence and the Canadian Forces in implementing the 34 recommendations from the office's 2005 special report regarding the treatment of military families after a member dies as a result of military service, and the investigations into non-combat deaths of military members.

Following this review, the office found that the overall situation had improved and progress had been made. However, the Ombudsman also informed the Minister of National Defence that there were many areas in which the chain of command needed to take more aggressive action to fully implement the office's recommendations.

In his letter to the Minister, the Ombudsman pointed out that the office was still receiving a number of complaints from military families who were not getting the information, support and assistance they needed after their loved one died as a result of military service. In particular, the Ombudsman criticized the Canadian Forces for excluding family members from Boards of Inquiry convened into the death or serious injury of a Canadian Forces member. He also noted that the military had not yet put in place a national policy for support to families of deceased Canadian Forces members even though commitments had been made in this regard.

In order to 'humanize' these problems for the Minister, the Ombudsman wrote to the Minister of National Defence again in April 2010, detailing the troubling experiences of six military families after the death of their Canadian Forces loved one. This letter included the tragic case of the Fynes family who had been waiting two and a half years to get responses to concerns that had been lingering since their son's death. The Ombudsman's letter also included:

- the case of a mother who was still fighting to get access to information regarding the death of her son in 2003;
- the case of a widow who had been waiting for a year and a half to get access to a Summary Investigation report into the death of her husband, a report which was finalized in June 2009;
- the case of Mr. Ron Grozelle who felt as though he has been treated as an enemy by the Canadian Forces since the disappearance and death of his son, Officer Cadet Joe Grozelle, in the fall of 2003; and
- the case of a widow who had been waiting more than four years for a copy of the Board of Inquiry report following the death of her Canadian Forces husband.

With these disturbing cases, the Ombudsman wanted to demonstrate to the Minister that the problems endured by families in 2005 are still affecting families in 2010-2011. In his letter to the Minister, the Ombudsman stated: "Families should not have to come to Ottawa and plead their cases publicly before the institution will listen to them and act on their concerns."

In August 2010, the Ombudsman received another response from the Minister of National Defence. Unfortunately, it provided little in terms of new information and there had been no significant movement on the part of the Canadian Forces to make much needed change, including providing grieving families with briefings, reports and responses regarding the loss of their family member.

Following this response, and further investigative work by the office, the Ombudsman published all correspondence to date on this issue and held a press conference in order to highlight the very real suffering of these military families.

At his December 2, 2010, press conference, the Ombudsman stated: "It is inconceivable to me that the Canadian Forces continues to ignore important recommendations aimed at helping military families after the death of a Canadian Forces loved one." He added, "It's even more disappointing when one considers that the changes needed to ensure that military families are treated with dignity and compassion would cost the Canadian Forces nothing."

Following this press conference and further correspondence from the Minister of National Defence, the Ombudsman's office continued to track the individual cases in question to ensure the Canadian Forces finally addresses their concerns in a fair and compassionate manner.

As part of a status report to the Minister in March 2011, the Ombudsman identified areas in which progress had been made. However, he indicated that some of the families still required further follow-up and information, and that the office had been contacted by new families who had similar concerns. The office continues to monitor all of these troubling cases.

It is also in the process of taking a comprehensive look at the overall support and treatment received by military families in order to determine whether a broader investigation is warranted.

Additional information on the follow-up review and the office's recommendations can be found on the office's website at [www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca](http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca).







### The Realities Facing Canadian Forces Families

The office's focus on military families over the past few years has revealed a number of significant issues that affect their lives. Since the Ombudsman's office was established in 1998, it has received in excess of 1,000 complaints from military families, including more than 100 complaints over the past fiscal year. These complaints revolve around five key issues: operational tempo; operational stress injuries; housing; medical concerns; and social and community support.

Every outreach visit to a base by the Ombudsman includes a town hall with families. Canadian Forces families have repeatedly and eloquently spoken of the impact on the family dynamic when their spouses are constantly sent on operations and training, often on short notice. They have also highlighted the resistance shown by many of their Canadian Forces spouses in reporting or seeking help when symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder appear. In addition, repeated absences and postings are seen by single parents as hampering their efforts in maintaining their strong relationships with their children.

The Ombudsman's office has also found that challenges in accessing health care, child care and employment for military spouses as Canadian Forces families move from one base to another and from province to province are taking a toll on the family unit. The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces unveiled the Canadian Forces Family Covenant in 2008, recognizing the important role that families play in enabling the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces. While this is an important step forward, the concerns brought to the Ombudsman's office by families highlight the urgent need to bridge the gap between the covenant and the needs of Canadian Forces families. In October 2010, the Chief of the Defence staff created a National Military Family Council to provide the Canadian Forces with advice and recommendations on the needs of military families. This is a positive initiative and the Ombudsman's Director General of Operations was pleased to brief the Council in February 2011 on the concerns reported by families to the office.

### WORKING FOR FAIR RECOGNITION

In May 2010, a retired Canadian Forces member contacted the Ombudsman's office after discovering that he had been denied the Canadian Forces' Decoration (CD). This decoration is awarded to officers and Non-Commissioned Members of the Canadian Forces who have completed twelve years of service and who have a good record of conduct. As part of an initial assessment of the case, an investigator from the Ombudsman's office reviewed the member's file and contacted the Directorate of Honours and Recognition – the section responsible for long service and good conduct awards for retired service members – to examine, and potentially rectify, the situation.

During his review, the Ombudsman investigator discovered that the member's Commanding Officer had not been in possession of specific information that could have influenced the decision to award the complainant the Canadian Forces' Decoration. In light of the new information, the investigator requested that a detailed review of the member's file be conducted by the Directorate of Honours and Recognition. In July 2010, the Directorate of Honours and Recognition completed its review and concluded that the member was indeed entitled to receive the decoration.

Following this review, the Ombudsman investigator sent a letter to the complainant explaining the steps that he needed to take to apply for, and receive, the recognition he so richly deserved.

## LOOKING AHEAD



In 2010, the Ombudsman announced that the office would be launching a third follow-up investigation into the issue of post-traumatic stress disorder and other operational stress injuries in the Canadian Forces.



As of the end of March 2011, the Office of the Ombudsman continued to work on several broader investigations. The Ombudsman and his management committee were also in the process of finalizing and implementing a number of corporate priorities and initiatives to ensure that the office is able to deliver quality service to the Defence community and value-for-money to Canadian taxpayers.

### BROADER INVESTIGATIONS

#### Operational Stress Injuries Follow-up Review

In December 2008, the Ombudsman's office published a second follow-up report, entitled *A Long Road to Recovery: Battling Operational Stress Injuries*, which was intended to track the progress made by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces in implementing the office's 2002 recommendations related to post-traumatic stress disorder and other operational stress injuries. The report also highlighted some new and evolving issues and problems. The overriding aim of the office, however, was to establish whether Canadian Forces members who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder or other operational stress injuries were being diagnosed and getting the care and treatment they needed in order to continue to be contributing members of Canadian society – either within the Canadian Forces or as civilians.

In releasing *A Long Road to Recovery*, the Ombudsman made nine recommendations to the Minister of National Defence which were intended to ensure that mental health sufferers in the Defence community received consistent, quality and timely care. The Ombudsman also stated that these recommendations would form the basis of all future monitoring and reporting by the office.

In 2010, the Ombudsman announced that the office would be launching a third follow-up investigation into the issue of post-traumatic stress disorder and other operational stress injuries in the Canadian Forces. While recognizing that progress has been made by the Canadian Forces

to prevent, identify and treat military personnel suffering from mental health injuries, the large number of current military sufferers – and even larger number of anticipated sufferers – has led the Ombudsman to the conclusion that this issue demands additional review and evaluation by the office.

The Ombudsman presented this information and these views most recently at the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs on November 30, 2010.

The third follow-up investigation was launched in early 2011.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

The Ombudsman's office is mandated to provide timely and effective service to the members of Canada's Defence community. Over the past fiscal year, the Ombudsman and the Director General of Operations undertook an independent external review of the office's operations, including its service delivery model. The objective of this operational review was to improve the office's efficiency and effectiveness in providing accurate information and timely responses to constituents.

The office has been working on this essential transformation for some time with an eye to ensuring that its vision, mission and functions are aligned and that the service it provides to constituents remains its *raison d'être*.

In optimizing the structure of the Operations branch, in particular, the Ombudsman and the Director General wanted to maintain a high degree of flexibility in order to be able to adapt to evolving and changing priorities. They were also determined to tailor the office's operational capability in order to conduct high caliber investigations.

The key elements of this transformation are as follows:

- maintain the existing service delivery model comprised of the intake process, early resolution of complaints and investigations;

- adopt a new organizational model that promotes career progression, and facilitates training and succession planning;
- increase resources to enhance efficiency at the intake level and in the early resolution of complaints;
- enhance the role of senior investigators in assigning portfolios to develop subject matter expertise; facilitate knowledge transfer; promote a consistency of approach to similar complaints; improve the office's ability to resolve issues with stakeholders; and increase its capacity to lead systemic investigations;
- develop competency profiles for each position in the Operations branch;
- create a competency gap analysis aimed at the identification of training needs to optimize skill sets at the investigative level;
- review recruiting tools; and
- develop and implement a new information database aimed at improving the office's ability to capture data, and monitor and report on performance.

In fiscal year 2011-2012, the Ombudsman's office will also begin:

- recruiting and hiring all indeterminate positions in the organizational model;
- developing a training plan that meets the needs of staff and the organization;
- implementing portfolio assignments to senior investigators; and
- reviewing service standards at all levels of the service delivery model.

The Ombudsman's office is confident that the operational review undertaken in 2010-2011 and the ongoing implementation of organizational changes will better position it to deliver on its mandate and provide a more efficient and timely response to Canada's Defence community.



## **BENEFITING FROM AN OMBUDSMAN INTERVENTION**

A retired member of the Canadian Forces approached the Ombudsman's office after his request for reimbursement of nearly \$3,000 in Land Transfer Taxes was denied. The member had purchased a home outside of the country and, in keeping with the Canadian Forces Integrated Relocation Program, had been told that he would be eligible for benefits equivalent to those awarded for a move to the closest Canadian border point to his new home. Subsequent to his move, the member submitted a claim to the Directorate of Compensation Benefits Administration (DCBA) requesting reimbursement of "Document Duty Fees." The claim was denied by DCBA because there were no provisions for such specific fees levied by foreign governments. Undeterred, the member re-submitted the claim with additional supporting documentation. The claim was once again denied. Not knowing where else to turn, the member contacted our office.

At the urging of the Ombudsman investigator assigned to the case, the Directorate of Compensation Benefits Administration undertook a third evaluation of the request for reimbursement. They determined that some of the fees charged by this foreign government were equivalent to the Land Transfer Tax and the Deed Transfer Fee and, as a result, the fees were approved.

Although it took the intervention of the Ombudsman's office to finally resolve the issue, the Canadian Forces member did receive the nearly \$3,000 that was owed to him.



## OUTREACH



The Ombudsman's office is committed to connecting directly with constituents where they live and work.



With the creation of the Strategic Outreach, Planning and Research group in the summer of 2010, the office focused on enhancing the overall awareness and understanding of the Ombudsman's role and mandate within the Defence community; making its services more readily available to Canadian Forces members, civilian employees of National Defence and their families; and gathering a better understanding of the issues and challenges facing members of the Defence community.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Ombudsman and his staff visited a number of military installations across the country; engaged constituents at military and departmental events; and reached out broadly to military and civilian leaders, stakeholders and like-minded organizations.

### VISITS TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

The Ombudsman's office is committed to connecting directly with constituents where they live and work. In this vein, the Ombudsman and his staff travel regularly to Canadian Forces bases and wings, where they meet with senior leaders, non-commissioned members of all ranks and occupations, family members, health care providers, chaplains, social workers and civilian employees. These sessions are meant to provide information on the office's services, to discuss issues of importance and to receive and document complaints. In 2010-2011, the Ombudsman and Ombudsman staff travelled to five Canadian Forces bases:

- Esquimalt (British Columbia) on May 10-14, 2010, engaging over 300 constituents and receiving 32 individual complaints for further review;
- Kingston (Ontario) on November 15-18, 2010, meeting with more than 400 constituents and receiving 26 individual complaints;
- Valcartier (Quebec) on November 22-25, 2010, engaging over 500 constituents and receiving 31 individual complaints;

- Shilo (Manitoba) on February 1-3, 2011, meeting with more than 750 constituents and receiving 13 individual complaints; and
- Gagetown (New Brunswick) on March 28-31, 2011, engaging nearly 650 constituents and receiving 37 individual complaints.

Planning is currently underway for Ombudsman visits to Canadian Forces installations in Geilenkirchen (Germany), Petawawa (Ontario), Edmonton (Alberta), Trenton (Ontario), Bagotville (Quebec) and Greenwood (Nova Scotia) in fiscal year 2011-2012.

A number of common concerns and complaints emerged from the Ombudsman's outreach visits in 2010-2011, most notably the serious impact that the current operational tempo was having on Canadian Forces members, their families and military caregivers. Following meetings and town hall sessions with more than two thousand members of Canada's Defence community, it was apparent that the cumulative impact of operational deployments, military exercises and training is having a significant effect on military personnel, leaving little time for family obligations and straining personal relationships. This seems to be particularly challenging for single parents, as noted in Kingston, as it contributes to difficulties in remaining connected with their children. In Shilo, the Ombudsman was informed that the time military personnel spend away from their home is contributing to financial crises, substance abuse, domestic violence and marital breakdowns. Canadian Forces personnel at Valcartier have experienced four deployments to Afghanistan and Haiti in recent years, which have posed a significant challenge to many relationships at the garrison.

Military caregivers are also concerned about the effect of the high operational tempo on their well-being and the quality of care they can provide. Caregivers discussed the threat of burnout as under-staffed health professionals are asked to manage concurrently their caseload, training and office administration. At Valcartier, for example, mental health professionals were facing significant stress as the military base lost seven caregivers in 2010-2011, while the caseload increased from 50 to 500. It was also noted at several Ombudsman visits that the quality and

quantity of service provided to patients would improve and increase by relieving health professionals from administrative support work and freeing up their clinical expertise. The Ombudsman acknowledges the ongoing effort to address these issues and encourages the Canadian Forces leadership to continue working to alleviate the impact of these demands on all military members.

Following a number of Ombudsman outreach visits, it was also evident that the stigma associated with operational stress injuries and other mental health issues is still very much a concern, especially among more junior personnel who worry about the impact of a diagnosis on their careers. Moreover, several military spouses mentioned that, due to stigma, their partners chose not to seek treatment. Consequently, in many cases, family members were forced to become primary caregivers. Spouses were also concerned that their partner would be released from the Canadian Forces due to an operational stress injury. In both Esquimalt and Valcartier, spouses noted that the military is not adequately equipping families to deal with problems related to operational stress injuries.

At the same time, the Ombudsman was informed that the Canadian Forces is making some progress in reducing stigma issues. Social workers in Shilo, for example, noted that the stigma associated with operational stress injuries is lessening due to the strong working relationship that mental health providers have developed with the base's chain of command. Nonetheless, caregivers across the country emphasized the need for greater medical and social support resources for Canadian Forces members suffering from operational stress injuries.

During the Ombudsman's outreach visits, a number of official languages concerns were raised by Canadian Forces members, especially individuals from Valcartier. For example, when posted outside of Quebec, members from this base said they experienced isolation caused by being a minority in a predominantly Anglophone community. They also claimed to have considerable difficulty accessing services in their preferred – or sometimes only – official language. At the same time, a number of Francophones who were deployed to

Afghanistan with an English unit claimed they had little, if any, services available to them in French. The most significant official languages concerns, however, involved the Canadian Forces training system. Bilingual Francophones told the Ombudsman that they were being tasked disproportionately to fill instructing positions at Canadian Forces Bases Gagetown and Borden due to a lack of bilingual Anglophone instructors. Consequently, these individuals believed their access to operational experience had been restricted. For their part, unilingual Anglophone personnel in Kingston told the Ombudsman that promotions were difficult to attain without a proficiency in both official languages; however, few can get access to full-time language training due to operational requirements.

Reserve Force personnel meeting with the Ombudsman informed him that they were concerned about their job security, as reductions to full-time employment contracts were anticipated. A number of Reservists in Kingston told the Ombudsman that they feared for their livelihoods. Their Regular Force counterparts questioned who would perform their duties, particularly given the high operational tempo. In addition, caregivers and military leaders were apprehensive that Reservists were being overlooked by the military health care system. It was noted that there are difficulties in monitoring Reservists returning from operational deployments after they revert to part-time status as there are no mechanisms in place to track them.

Through his outreach visits, the Ombudsman also found that housing and related benefits are the source of tremendous frustration for Canadian Forces personnel and their families. Significant sources of dissatisfaction include: the quality and timeliness of services provided by the Canadian Forces Housing Agency; the conditions and maintenance of the residential properties; and the administration of the priority list for housing. In Esquimalt, many were concerned that the Post Living Differential benefit would be reduced. This was also a significant concern in Shilo, where Canadian Forces members do not qualify for the benefit even though the cost of living is high due to its isolation. Unfortunately, those in Shilo do not qualify for Isolation Pay even though the closest city is a 30 minute drive away.

Adequate health care, quality daycare services and employment opportunities for military spouses are harbingers of the well-being of military families. Yet a number of families informed the Ombudsman of the difficulties they had in securing a family physician. Moreover, in most locations visited, long waiting lists for daycare at the Military Family Resource Centres prevented most families from accessing childcare services on base with those who understand unique military needs and culture. Consequently, many sought daycare services from unlicensed providers, from private companies at higher costs or, as noted in Shilo, spouses left their jobs to care for their children. Finally, the Ombudsman was told that jobs for military spouses were either scarce or low-paying. A number of families in Esquimalt and Valcartier also noted that some professional credentials (e.g., nursing and teaching) were not recognized by the respective provincial authorities.

The well-being of military families is a priority for the Ombudsman and the office is in the process of taking a comprehensive look at the overall support and treatment received by military families in order to determine whether a broader investigation is warranted.

## INTERACTING WITH CONSTITUENTS AT DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS

Over the course of 2010-2011, the Ombudsman's office participated in several outreach events in the National Capital Region, meeting with constituents and increasing the organization's visibility. Office staff took part in the following functions:

- Conflict Resolution Day (October 21, 2010), meeting with 275 people;
- International Day for Persons with Disabilities (December 3, 2010), meeting with more than 200 constituents;
- International Women's Day (March 8, 2011), meeting with 125 people; and
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21, 2011), meeting with 125 constituents.

In order to ensure that newly hired departmental employees are acquainted with the services provided by the Ombudsman's office, the outreach team also participates at monthly orientation sessions for new civilian members of the Defence community. In 2010-2011, Ombudsman staff interacted with over 450 new employees.

### **FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER OMBUDSMAN ORGANIZATIONS**

In order to foster and maintain constructive working relationships, the Ombudsman often meets with military and civilian leadership to discuss issues of importance and concerns brought forward by constituents. In addition to undertaking numerous one-on-one meetings with senior leaders throughout the year (including with the Deputy Minister of National Defence, the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and the Surgeon General), the Ombudsman met with the Army Council in February 2011 to discuss key difficulties faced by members of the Defence community. The Director General of Operations presented to the Chief of Military Personnel Command Council at their Senior Leadership Symposium in October 2010. The Ombudsman also presented at the Chief Warrant Officer Qualifying Course in St-Jean, Quebec, on three separate occasions in 2010-2011. Plans are underway to brief the Command Team Course in April 2011.

The Ombudsman's office also meets on a regular basis with key stakeholders. In February 2011, for example, the Director General of Operations met with the National Military Family Council to discuss issues and concerns affecting military families across the country.

Conferences provide the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman's office with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of issues and concerns of constituents, as well as to build relationships with subject matter experts, scholars and executives of other similar organizations. Last year, for example, the office attended the 26th annual conference of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies held in Montreal, the inaugural Military and Veteran Health Research forum held in Kingston in November, a Women in Defence and Security conference in December, and the Conference of Defence Associations Institute's annual symposium on defence and security in February.

The Ombudsman also participated in the Second International Conference of Ombudsman Institutions for the Armed Forces in Vienna, Austria in April 2010. The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces is one of the world's leading institutions in the areas of security sector reform and governance and it co-chairs this annual conference, which began in Germany in 2009. The purpose of the conference is to facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned related to the protection and promotion of the welfare and rights of armed forces personnel amongst military ombudsman institutions from around the world.

At the 2010 conference in Vienna, the Ombudsman was asked, and has subsequently agreed, to co-host this international gathering in Canada next year. This prestigious conference will be held in Ottawa, Ontario in September 2012, marking the first time the conference will be held in North America.

Would you like someone from the Ombudsman's office to speak to your group/organization?

E-mail the details of your request to:  
[ombudsman-communications@forces.gc.ca](mailto:ombudsman-communications@forces.gc.ca) or call 1-888-828-3626



## OMBUDSMAN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE



The Ombudsman's Advisory Committee consists of volunteers with specialized expertise in military matters and/or comprehensive knowledge of the ombudsman profession.

*Back Row (L-R): Commander Brigitte Boutin; Mr. Pierre Daigle; Mr. Clare Lewis; Mr. Howard Sapers; and Chief Warrant Officer J.W. Dalke. Front Row: Ms. Annie Vaillancourt; Ms. Brenda Ebear; and Ms. Colleen Calvert. Absent: Reverend Canon Baxter Park and Lieutenant Colonel John Conrad.*

The Ombudsman's Advisory Committee consists of volunteers with specialized expertise in military matters and/or comprehensive knowledge of the ombudsman profession. The committee provides the Ombudsman with advice related to the mandate, professional principles and structure of the office.

In May and October 2010, the committee met in Ottawa to discuss a number of the broader issues facing the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, including: the care and treatment of injured members of the Canadian Forces; current and anticipated challenges to the Canadian Forces health care system; difficulties facing Canada's military families; changes to the Canadian Forces grievance process; problems and concerns associated with the military posting process; and ongoing and future challenges associated with operational stress injuries in the Canadian Forces. The Chief of the Defence Staff attended the committee meeting in May to discuss his priorities for ensuring the welfare and well-being of Canadian Forces members and their families.

At the May 2010 meeting, the Ombudsman's Advisory Committee welcomed a new chair, Mr. Howard Sapers, Correctional Investigator of Canada, as well as two new members, Ms. Annie Vaillancourt and Chief Warrant Officer J.W. Dalke.

At the October 2010 meeting, the Ombudsman's Advisory Committee also said farewell to Mr. Clare Lewis, who served more than five years as an invaluable sounding board for initiatives and recommendations being considered by the office. As a former Ombudsman for Ontario, Mr. Lewis' knowledge and expertise were greatly appreciated by the Ombudsman, committee members and office staff.

At the end of March 2011, the Ombudsman's Advisory Committee consisted of the following individuals:

- Commander Brigitte Boutin is the Formation Comptroller for Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT) in Halifax.
- Ms. Colleen Calvert is the Executive Director of the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre.
- Lieutenant-Colonel John Conrad is a published author, lecturer and a Reserve Commanding Officer with 28 years of experience in the Canadian Forces. In 2006, he served as Commanding Officer of the Canadian Logistics Battalion, the unit responsible for sustaining the Canadian Task Force in Southern Afghanistan.
- Chief Warrant Officer J.W. Dalke enrolled in the Canadian Forces as a Supply Technician and has served in a variety of positions throughout Canada. Currently, he is the Chief Warrant Officer for 2 Canadian Air Division in Winnipeg.
- Ms. Brenda Ebear is the Greenhouse Supervisor and Roads and Grounds second-in-command at 4 Wing Cold Lake. In 2007, she received a *Special Recognition Award* from the Office of the Ombudsman for her work as a Workplace Relations Advisor and for her extensive volunteer work at 4 Wing Cold Lake.
- Commander the Reverend Canon Baxter Park is Formation Chaplain for Maritime Forces Atlantic.
- Ms. Annie Vaillancourt is on the Board of Directors of the Valcartier Military Family Resource Centre and is the spouse of a Canadian Forces member. Ms. Vaillancourt has been a member of the Defence community for over ten years.
- Mr. Howard Sapers was appointed as Correctional Investigator of Canada in 2004. He has a strong background in corrections, rehabilitation of offenders and crime-prevention gained through employment and community service. He has also authored several publications and a number of articles regarding the role and principles of ombudsmanry. Mr. Sapers serves as the committee chair.
- Mr. Bill Tanner is a Second World War veteran and an honorary member of the committee.

## OMBUDSMAN'S COMMENDATIONS



The Ombudsman's Commendations recognize individuals and groups across the Defence community who have gone above and beyond the normal requirements of their job to help bring positive and lasting change to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

*Back Row (L-R): Correctional Investigator of Canada, Howard Sapers; Senator Lucie Pépin; Ombudsman Pierre Daigle; and Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Bruce Donaldson. Front Row: Member of Parliament Peter Stoffer; Member of Parliament Claude Bachand; Warrant Officer Madonna Musgrave; Chief Warrant Officer France Dupuis; Mrs. Elizabeth Atkins; Captain Dave Blackburn; and Member of Parliament Jack Harris.*

The Ombudsman's Commendations, awarded annually, recognize individuals and groups across the Defence community who have gone above and beyond the normal requirements of their job to help bring positive and lasting change to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces. The awards also recognize those who demonstrate exceptional problem-solving and complaint resolution skills.

At a special ceremony held in Ottawa on October 21, 2010, the Ombudsman honoured four members of the Defence community with commendations. The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Vice-Admiral Bruce Donaldson, and senior staff from the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces were present, along with a number of parliamentarians, to recognize these outstanding members of the Defence community.

Information on the commendations can be found on the office's website at: [www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca](http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca).

## **RECIPIENTS OF THE OMBUDSMAN'S SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD**

**Mrs. Elizabeth Atkins**

Mrs. Elizabeth Atkins' innate passion to help others has made her an invaluable contributor to military family support networks across the country for many years. From providing significant input on an Ombudsman report on operational stress injuries, to contributing to the creation of the national Operational Stress Injury & Social Support Program, Mrs. Atkins has been an influential voice for military members and their families. Additionally, as the Alberta Regional Representative of the OSISS Family Peer Support Program, Mrs. Atkins is frequently called upon to intervene in conflict situations, and naturally chooses to work collaboratively with all parties to find solutions and prevent future issues. The Defence community has benefited immensely from Mrs. Atkins' compassion, knowledge and leadership.

**Captain Dave Blackburn**

As Chief of the Department of Psychosocial Services and Mental Health with the Geilenkirchen, Germany detachment of the Centre of Health Services of the Canadian Forces, Captain Dave Blackburn has devoted himself to providing exemplary care and support to military members and their families living outside of Canada. In the three years that he has served in Germany, Captain Blackburn has made an overwhelmingly positive impression on the community by providing patient care that is second to none, establishing a seminar for caregivers and support personnel in Europe and by helping to improve directives and evaluation tools in order to ensure a better transition for Canadian Forces members and their families. In addition, Captain Blackburn's doctoral thesis will provide the military with scientific data that will be invaluable to understanding the realities of postings outside of Canada. The unwavering support that Captain Blackburn has provided to the Defence community is admirable, and the results he has achieved for countless individuals are extraordinary.

## **RECIPIENTS OF THE LIZ HOFFMAN MEMORIAL COMMENDATION FOR COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

**Warrant Officer Madonna Musgrave**

As Supervisor of the Reserve Force Released Personnel Pay Office, Warrant Officer Madonna Musgrave has consistently gone above and beyond the requirements of her job to assist the Ombudsman's office in ensuring fair and compassionate treatment for Canadian Forces members. Demonstrating a real commitment to informal conflict resolution, she has been resourceful and determined in her efforts to solve problems quickly and at the lowest possible level. In one particular case where a Canadian Forces member was facing extreme financial hardship, Warrant Officer Musgrave took it upon herself to contact the member's Brigade directly and determine a way to resolve the problem. She then expedited the paperwork and secured a cheque to ensure the member had the money he so desperately needed. Warrant Officer Musgrave has always provided timely and accurate information to the Ombudsman's office and extraordinary service to the men and women of the Canadian Forces. She is a credit to Canada's military.

**Chief Warrant Officer France Dupuis**

In an extraordinary display of resourcefulness and perseverance, Chief Warrant Officer France Dupuis – in her capacity as a Career Manager – helped the Ombudsman's office achieve a positive result for a military family in need. When informed that a Canadian Forces member was having great difficulty with a new posting as a result of compelling family circumstances, Chief Warrant Officer Dupuis agreed to contact the member's chain of command to negotiate a later posting date. Refusing to accept a negative response, she then contacted the new posting location to address the obstacles that were preventing a resolution in this case. As a result of her determined efforts, Chief Warrant Officer Dupuis was able to secure a later posting date for the Canadian Forces member. Her willingness to cooperate with the Ombudsman's office, combined with her outstanding ability to resolve conflict, helped produce positive and timely results for a family in desperate circumstances. The Defence community is fortunate to have such a caring and resolute individual among its ranks.



## APPENDIX I – DISPOSITION OF CASES (2010-2011)

Total Cases Handled*	1,688
Cases Closed	1,302
Cases in Progress (as of March 31, 2011)	386
Cases Closed at Intake	1,058
Information or Assistance Provided	516
Referred to Existing Mechanisms	242
Withdrawn	105
Abandoned	101
Outside Mandate	94
Cases Closed in Complaint Resolution	100
Information or Assistance Provided	43
Informal Resolution	40
Referred to Existing Mechanisms	5
Abandoned	4
Withdrawn	4
Investigated / No Follow-up Required	3
Outside Mandate	1
Cases Closed at the Systemic Investigation Level	4
Investigated / No Follow-up Required	2
Information or Assistance Provided	1
Outside Mandate	1
Cases Closed at Investigation	140
Investigated / No Follow-up Required	73
Information or Assistance Provided	18
Informal Resolution	14
Referred to Existing Mechanisms	13
Outside Mandate	8
Investigated / Follow-up Required	5
Withdrawn	5
Abandoned	4

\* This includes new cases, cases re-opened and cases carried over from previous fiscal years.

## APPENDIX II – FINANCIAL REPORT

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### SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

In 2010-2011, the expenditures of the Office of the Ombudsman totalled approximately \$4.6 million, of which \$4.0 million was related to salaries.

Mail and courier services	\$4,026
Supplies/furniture	\$28,088
Training and professional dues	\$30,361
Acquisition/rental office equipment	\$11,131
Network maintenance and support	\$53,944
Telecommunications & IT connections	\$94,159
Travel and transportation	\$75,778
Communications & public outreach	\$55,299
Professional & special services	\$250,244
Salaries	\$4,005,644
Total	\$4,608,674